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ABSTRACT

A collaboration between a university English professor and a high-school English teacher was successful in building community, yet rather unsuccessful in manipulating the Internet. Their collaboration worked, as far as it did, because of an absence of hierarchy. To create a basis for comparison with other studies, analysis of the collaboration can be anchored by a list compiled by Paul Wangemann in his dissertation concerning successful collaboration. Cultural differences in the institutions made for day-to-day interference in collaborations: the calendars of high schools and universities do not match; the nature of instructional contact does not match; and accountability differs at the high school and college level. Particularly in the case of collaboration involving the Internet, sources of authority tend to lie outside the classroom, and classroom leaders now more frequently model the role of the active learner. (Contains 18 references and an outline of the criteria for successful collaboration developed by Paul Wangemann.) (RS)

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THE MULTICULTURAL E-MAIL OF HIGH SCHOOL-COLLEGE COLLABORATION

B.13 A Community of Learners: School and College Faculty Collaborate
CCCC Convention, 16-19 March 1994: Common Concerns, Uncommon Realities

Paul Wangemann's Criteria for Successful Collaboration

- Clarity of purpose†
- Complementary dissimilarity between the partners
- Overlapping self-interests
- Sufficient time to build bridges of communication and trust
- Clarification and coordination of roles and responsibilities within the partnership†
- Shared ownership
- Emphasis on action rather than structure building
- Adequate resources
- Leadership from key administrators†
- Institutional commitment to the satisfying of mutual self-interests†
- An ongoing system for research and evaluation†
- An understanding of each institution's culture

Cultural Mismatch and Mary Louise Pratt's "Contact Zones"

- Calendars do not match.
- The nature of the contact does not match.
- Accountability differs.

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International E-Mail Classroom Connections. To subscribe: iecc-request@stolaf.edu. To contribute: iecc@stolaf.edu. List owner: Craig D. Rice cdr@stolaf.edu. [clearinghouse for class sets of penpals]

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Text of remarks made by Elaine E. Whitaker

CCCC session on School-College Collaboration

Though the materials I have just distributed are largely bibliographical, it would be fair to say that we collaborated first and surveyed the literature of collaboration later. On the basis of publishers' descriptions, I have included two books I have not yet seen: Delicate Balances and Collaborative Learning. One point made in the literature itself is that it only reports successful collaborations; we have just presented evidence to the contrary. We have been very successful in building community, yet rather unsuccessful in manipulating the Internet.

What we share above all--something largely ignored in the literature--is a love of teaching, more exactly, a concern for those we teach. Our advocacy of our students, I have come to see as both the strength that runs this collaboration and, parenthetically, as one of its weaknesses. The reported collaboration with the greatest similarity to our own is the "hand in hand" collaboration of Corbitt and Barrett in special education. In contrast, most reported collaborations are modeled from the top down, often by university faculty wishing to do research. My hierarchical language is deliberate. The one impression I must leave with you is that collaborative arrangements work best in the absence of hierarchy. This conclusion is confirmed by reports from the Thinking Mathematics project, a textbook construction project reported by Hattrup and Bickel.

In order to create a basis for comparison with other studies, I have anchored analysis of our collaboration to a list compiled by Paul Wangemann in his dissertation concerning successful collaboration and used by Corbitt and Barrett. (†s indicate criteria viewed as unimportant by Corbitt and Barrett.)

- Clarity of purpose†
- Complementary dissimilarity between the partners
- Overlapping self-interests (Corbitt and Barrett expand this category to emphasize interest in meeting the needs of students.)
- Sufficient time to build bridges of communication and trust (Corbitt and Barrett add the important reason: "prevent[ing] a sense that either partner was being exploited by the other" (304).)
- Clarification and coordination of roles and responsibilities within the partnership†
- Shared ownership
- Emphasis on action rather than structure building
- Adequate resources
- Leadership from key administrators (If not "leadership" then "support" is invaluable. Elaine Hill secured this from her principal, supervisor, and corporate partners.)†
- Institutional commitment to the satisfying of mutual self-interests†
- An ongoing system for research and evaluation†
- An understanding of each institution's culture

We have previously experienced each other's cultures: Elaine is an advanced graduate student at another institution; I was once a public school teacher. Yet, even in the best of circumstances, cultural differences in institutions make for enormous day-to-day interference in collaborations.

Writing in a recent issue of College English, Patricia Bizzell suggests that we develop a composition pedagagy based on Mary Louise Pratt's theory of contact zones. In challenging our students to explore each other's cultures and in committing ourselves to the collaboration that facilitates this exploration, we have become painfully aware of the day-to-day mismatch of school-college collaboration.

- Calendars do not match. Therefore, momentum in any given term does not match. Furthermore, the emotional impact of a senior year in high school contrasts with that of a first year in college.
- The nature of the contact does not match. High school contact is daily, potentially all day, and parental. Contact in colleges occurs once, twice, or three times a week for one or two hours and is not *in loco parentis*. Unless the college is residential, students may be difficult to locate. On the other hand, colleges do not experience classroom interruptions for testing, pep rallies, and other programs.
- Accountability differs. Whereas students in high schools remain for the year, students enrolled in college courses may elect to withdraw from them or attend haphazardly.

Despite these obstacles, successful collaborations continue to occur. Returning to my original emphasis, they occur whenever hierarchical concerns can be either minimized or openly discussed. Furthermore, as any definition of the word "collaboration" would imply, they occur wherever parties can tolerate and even relish shared authority. Particularly in the case of collaboration involving the Internet, sources of authority tend to lie outside the classroom, and those of us who have traditionally cast ourselves as classroom leaders now more frequently model the role of active learner. Though we have all committed ourselves to life-long learning, we seldom publically assume the role of student. By doing so, however, we facilitate true collaboration.

Handout and text prepared by Elaine E. Whitaker, Ph.D., Department of English, University of Alabama at Birmingham, preceded on the program by a presentation by Elaine N. Hill and a jointly prepared video